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DRAFT Response to Delta ISB assessment report for discussion at the Delta Independent Science Board's May 17, 2022 meeting

May 5, 2022

Laurel Larsen, Delta Lead Scientist
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Sent via email to Laurel.Larsen@deltacouncil.ca.gov

cc:

Members, Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee
Sent via email to Amanda.Bohl@deltacouncil.ca.gov

Members, Delta Stewardship Council
Sent via email to Engage@deltacouncil.ca.gov

Dennis O'Connor, Chief Consultant
Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
Sent via email to Dennis.O'Connor@sen.ca.gov

Pablo Garza, Chief Consultant
California Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee
Sent via email to Pablo.Garza@asm.ca.gov

Subject: Response to the Delta Science Program's Assessment of the Impact and Value of the Delta Independent Science Board

Dear Dr. Larsen,

The Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB) thanks the Delta Science Program for its thorough and [insightful review](#) of the Delta ISB's first decade of activities. The inventory of the Board's more than fifty major products in its first 10 years documents the scope and history of past activities for state officials in agencies and the legislature, members of the public and stakeholders, and incoming members who can build upon these products. We appreciate learning that a wide variety of stakeholders and agencies have used the Delta ISB's products to make changes in and otherwise inform programs and activities. Finally, we were heartened to learn

DRAFT

of the generally high regard in which the board and its products were held as a source of independent credible information, as documented by surveys. The substantial stakeholder suggestions documented will help the Delta ISB in planning and improving its activities and products into the future.

We concur with the suggestion that Delta ISB products can be made more useful by increasing the integration of activities with the Delta Stewardship Council (Council), other state and federal agencies, and all stakeholders. We have developed several ideas for modifying Delta ISB operations for further exploration. We would like to see Delta ISB reviews be more structurally integrated into the Delta Science Strategy. Although we have seen some uptake of our recommendations in strategy documents, a clearer process for incorporating Delta ISB review findings into the Delta agencies' scientific strategies and priorities is desirable.

In terms of changes to Delta ISB internal workings, we propose changing the process of selecting and conducting reviews by more meaningfully engaging stakeholders and by considering a wider range of product types that may be effective for different audiences. We have already begun to enhance our stakeholder engagement during review initiation and planning. We will continue to adapt our review process to expand and deepen our interactions with diverse stakeholders during all phases of review development. We will be seeking opportunities for regular interactions with diverse stakeholders on review scoping, post-review workshops, blog posts, conversations and presentations with agency leaders, and other communication mechanisms.

We understand that some stakeholders expressed an interest in making the recommendations of thematic reviews more practical and actionable. We agree that increasing the specificity of recommendations will be useful and that enhanced stakeholder engagement is likely to promote practicality and relevance of recommendations for agencies. However, we also will strive to balance the practicality of recommendations with our role in advancing ideas that may be difficult to implement in the short term, but are possible with longer lead times. We will be reviewing and updating our guidelines for reviews accordingly.

In addition to developing approaches to learn from and receive information from stakeholders, we will identify options for raising awareness of Delta ISB products and tailoring products to different audiences. We are already meeting with Council communications staff to learn more about their capabilities and operations and develop implementation ideas for existing and new reviews and activities. More

DRAFT

generally, we would like to learn more about how agencies receive scientific information to inform our choices of publication venues and other outreach options. We hope that the Council and the Delta Science Program can be partners in future communication planning.

We look forward to continued feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of our Board activities and reviews and how they can be improved and become more useful for this challenging system.

Sincerely,

Lisa Wainger, Ph.D.
Chair-elect, Delta Independent Science Board

Jay Lund, Ph.D.
Past Chair, Delta Independent Science Board

Steve Brandt, Ph.D.
Chair, Delta Independent Science Board